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Blessed Peter Canisius and the Sodality

Blessed Peter Canisius, whose canonization by the Holy See in the near future is now assured, was, as is well known, a distinguished propagator and defender of the Sodality of Our Lady. Already, about the year 1550, he had founded a pious society at Ingolstadt among the theological students, from which the Sodality was to come forth later at his suggestion. He also helped Fr. Francis Koster to establish a Sodality at Dilingen in 1577. At Friburg, Switzerland, in 1581, he started another Sodality of Our Lady for the townsmen, and a third (it may be noted) for women ; then a year later, when the College had been begun, he formed a Sodality among the young students. (1).

The extent of the love and zeal with which this holy man dedicated himself to the Sodality of Our Lady, is clear from his books and letters. We give some quotations here, since Ours, who are Directors, will surely profit by the solemn occasion of his canonization to inform their Sodalists on the subject.

Thus, in his golden work, « *The Virgin Mary, the Incomparable Mother of God* », B. Canisius defends the Sodalities against the enemies of the Catholic cause. In Book III, chapter X, he says (2) :

" Again, our opponents are offended by the fact that a Society or Sodality (commonly known as a fraternity) is formed of those who wish, to be devout clients of Mary. But why are they offended if for this purpose, pious people come together and enter into a holy Society not moved by any desire of money or temporal gain or empty praise, but inspired with loving desires of worshipping God and praising Mary?

Whenever then, the devout children of the Church have piously established anything of this sort, why should not the Church permit it, approve it, and show that it pleases her? Why should she not, in a spirit of holy liberality, enrich it with spiritual favors, especially when it becomes for many persons an occasion of greater exercise not only of faith, but also of prayer, charity and pious works ?

Oh that we may have very many who will enter this distinguished society and make up, at least in some degree, for what so many others, either through negligence or malice, have omitted in the cult of the Virgin. For to tell the truth, the faith and piety of our forefathers is every-where trampled under foot, prayer both public and private, is falling into disuse, some of the bonds of the fear and love of God seem to be broken, and finally, the heresies and the recent disputes about the Faith, have so excited and laid waste the souls of the people, that many are content with the profession of faith alone and of a naked Christianity, give no thanks to Christ, do not love Mary, do not recognize the Saints, and scarcely believe in the existence of hell. "

In the 5th Book, chapter XXVI, he writes as follows against the heresiarch Platzius :

" He also rails at those who enter a pious Sodality in order to sing the praises of Mary, according to the Sodality constitution. He does not know how pleasing to God and how powerful for moving the minds of men is the bond of fraternal charity by which many inspired with one and the same spirit piously associate themselves for the more diligent exercise of the worship of God and devotion to Mary, and unite in a certain Sodality, about which we have spoken, to encourage each other mutually to pray to God and honor the Virgin. "

Besides, the above, there is a celebrated letter of Blessed Canisius, which he wrote from Ingol-

(1) W. Kratz, S. J.,: *Aus alten Zeiten. Die Mar. Kongregationen in den Ländern deutscher Zunge. Ihr Werden und Wirken von 1575 bis 1650.* pp. 63 sqq., 94 sqq.
(2) Edit. Migne, p. 1077.

stadt to Father Koster on Nov. 8, 1577, two years after the latter had established a Sodality of Our Lady at Cologne. Blessed Canisius praises the Sodalists of Cologne and exhorts them to exchange letters with the Sodalists of Ingolstadt.

The following are his words:

" May the peace of Christ be ours forever, Reverend Father!

When I arrived in Ingolstadt, to help our Father Provincial in visiting this college your Reverence's letter was given to me and I was very glad indeed to receive it. It certainly shows Father Koster's old and fraternal affection for me and approves in every way our work for Mary, and announces the realization of the rewards for our past labor for which we had long since prayed.

Blessed be God who inspired your Charity with the holy idea of stirring up through it (the Sodality founded by Father Koster) the souls of pious youths in many places to pray for us. And I do not doubt but what your efforts and those pious wishes and desires are very pleasing to the most Blessed Virgin, our most powerful Lady. Through the same Virgin Mother, who has never been and never will be sufficiently honored, I repeatedly beg and pray all who have entered this holy Sodality, to go on courageously in their lofty vocations firm in the conviction that the wonderful help of divine grace will be present to the clients of Mary, not only in the beginning of their service but still more abundantly in its progress.

But the fact that false brethren may either envy such happy forecasts or openly cry out against them, is a clear proof that this work, because it is pleasing to God and a cause of salvation to many, is therefore destined to be tried and signalized by persecution on the part of certain individuals. If that sort of zeal pleases our opponents, let them have it . . . it is a zeal which is common also to those who in a heretical spirit, are always impudently gnawing at approved institutions and exercises of religious life, and perversely trying to uproot them. It is for us to hope with all the more reason for the signal restoration of the Catholic religion in Germany, in proportion as greater numbers work together in the name of Jesus to restore the cult of the Virgin Mary to its proper place, and to confer lustre on the newly founded Sodality. Let heretics mock! Let them inveigh against Christ's little ones for singing their Hosanna's or Ave Maria's over and over again; and let our modern world be filled with wonder at the honors paid once more to the Mother of God with new fervor in all ranks of society! Thrice happy, and worthy of a special crown, do I pronounce those who have joined their efforts with those of your Reverence in commencing and propagating this holy society, — however much opposition there may be from the Mariophobes; namely, those who have been taken in by the fraud and cunning of the old serpent, that most bitter adversary of the second Eve.

But what would please me very much, and what I absolutely wish to be done in the first place, is that the members of this institution who are under our care (and they are neither few nor obscure), should write you letters at the beginning of the year giving good news about the success and progress of the Sodality. They certainly seem able to do so on their own account, for they accomplish much that is worthy to be recorded and praised; with the help of Our Lady, they overcome themselves in excellent fashion, and to the wonderment of many, they make such progress in piety that we may praise Christ in His Mother and in these, her most devout clients. And it will certainly be profitable for posterity, that a record be made of the wonderful works of God which continually shine forth in all directions both in the younger and the older members of this Sodality, — just as if Christ were lighting a new flame in many hearts for the sake of his Mother, and wished to make her stand out more clearly in the North than ever before."

Finally we have a unique synopsis of an *exhortation* which B. Canisius gave to the Sodalists at Hall in the Tyrol, when in 1580, he was assisting the Provincial, Father Paul Hoffaeus, in the visitation of the colleges of the Society there. The Sodality of Hall at the time was not made up of gymnasium students only, but included some adult noblemen besides.

The synopsis (which was found among the writings of B. Canisius) was as follows:

" There is no need for me to say many things to you, beloved brethren in the Lord, for your exhortation, consolation or instruction, especially as there are not wanting to you both interior and exterior exhortations, consolations and instructions in this praiseworthy Sodality or fraternity of yours, in the church and elsewhere.

But I give special thanks to the Lord, who chose you and gathered you into the said Sodality at this time when it is especially necessary that the Mother of God should have many, lovers and faithful servants, as she deserves and the divine decree requires for the good and salvation of many.

I thank God for your obedience, which you show today in communicating and in thus applying to yourselves the precious treasure of Indulgences, which were recently promulgated by command of the Sovereign Pastor and Ruler of the Church.

But if I ought to express freely what is in my mind, I would faithfully warn and beg you, to devote yourselves constantly to this Fraternity, as true and chosen Sodalists and brothers; and as is also done by others elsewhere, with the special blessing of God, the wonderment of good people and the profit of very many.

You will be really devoted members of your Sodality, if you make good use of the feast celebrated yesterday, — that of the Visitation of Mary; that is to say, if you mould yourselves in some degree according to the example of Our Lady, who showed herself as the handmaid of the Lord to Gabriel, and a faithful relative to Elisabeth. The handmaid of the Lord: because she offered herself wholly to God to fulfill his will as declared to her by the Angel. A faithful relative: because she visited the aged matron solely out of charity and desired to serve her in all humility.

Let us also be servants of God and let us obey our superiors, who as angels of God are sent to us and set up to be interpreters of the divine will in all that is to be believed and done.

Let us also be faithful in serving our brethren, and let us exercise ourselves like Mary in works of true charity and mercy.

Especially let us learn from Mary to be zealous in what regards the honor of God and the salvation of souls; then we too shall experience the good results of our conduct as did the Mother of God. For 1st she caused her cousin to be filled with the Holy Ghost. 2d, John to be sanctified, 3d, God to be praised in the whole house of Zachary; 4th, she made many persons sharers in the grace of the Gospel, which is charity, joy, peace, consolation and fervor.

Let it not be enough for us if we avoid great sins, but let us 'go up into the hill country' and let us strive to improve others also, let us exhort sinners, let us instruct the erring, let us visit the miserable, let us bring in doubters, let us correct the unjust. By our example let us aid all we can of those who come in contact with us in school, at home and abroad. Let us have a high opinion of this institution which is given us by God, useful to many, honored and enriched with so many privileges, and so widely spread: in it you will contemplate our Lady the Queen of Heaven; you will honor her constantly, you will seek everything from God through Her.... " (1)

In this exhortation, it certainly is worthy of note that B. Canisius, besides piety and the exercise of charity, distinctly mentions and inculcates apostolic zeal and activities connected with the winning of souls to God. This should be especially noted by those who assert that the Sodality in the beginning aimed at nothing more then devotional exercises, and was nothing more than a pious Prayer association for boys.

But since now through the goodness of God, the highest honors are being prepared by the Vicar of Christ for our B. Canisius, certainly nothing should be dearer to the Directors of Our Sodalities than to recall the memory of the blessed man who has merited so well of the Sodality, and to hold up as an example even to priests not of the Society, his fervor in arousing Sodalists to honor Mary, his virtues, and his zeal for souls.

This is the man who was hardly surpassed by anyone in his labors for the restoration of the true faith throughout Germany. When he sought for companions in his labors and struggles, he turned his eyes to the Sodality of Our Lady.

(1) The letter and synopsis are in "*Beati Petri Canisii S.J. Epistulae et Acta,*" VII, pp. 422 sq, and 829 sqq. Edited by O. Braunsberger, S. J.

That Idea

For many years, Protestants, notably Baptists and Methodists, had formed associations for the spread of their churches in the United States, when it occurred to the parish priest of a little town in Michigan, that Catholics might do the same. When the idea had taken shape in his mind, he wrote an article on it for the "*American Ecclesiastical Review*", which called forth a discussion which was participated in by several priests. The result was the formation of a society under the Archbishop of Chicago. Next came the publication of a quarterly bulletin which before a year was up, became a monthly. There followed quickly approbation of many other Bishops and of Rome itself. The faithful, many of whom were not aware that there were Catholics without a pastor and a church, gave generously of their funds, and from the day of the foundation of the Catholic Church Extension Society until now, several millions of dollars have been put to the service of the Church, help has been given in the erection of 2,279 churches, and the Society continues working with undiminished vigor. Canada copied it and England is now beginning to do the same. And all because one man got a good idea and started out all alone to make it a reality.

Thirty years, more or less, had gone by in 1917, since the foundation by Protestants of an organization among the students in their colleges which had as its aim to interest all of them in the work of foreign missions, — not to make all of them actual laborers in the fields afar — not at all — but simply to get them to work, to plant in their hearts an abiding love for the spread of the Gospel, which love should remain with them for life, though they should live and die in some cross-road town, without having ever laid eyes on a Chinaman or a Jap. In thirty years, that league of college students sent 8,000 missionaries, men and women, to foreign lands, and was a great factor in building up the unbounded enthusiasm for the missions which reigns in the large sects. Then it was that Fr. Clifford *King*, a third-year theologian of the Society of the Divine Word, lifted his voice to propose that what Protestants could do, Catholics could do also. He started the movement; it spread quickly to a few colleges; and today there are 500,000 members in 3,000 Catholic schools and colleges of the United States. There were 410,000 members in 1923, and they gave, in money alone, doll. 572,000 to the work of the Missions. Some of us can remember when the whole United States did not give that much to the Propagation of the Faith. Moreover, they gathered 16,000 pounds of can-

celled postage stamps and about twice as much tinfoil. And besides other minor works of a material nature, they piled up an immense number of prayers, aspirations, hours of work, study, etc., the list of which looks like a report of the Apostleship of Prayer. Every fifteen days their newspaper, "*The Shield*", is published, and a strong central organization has been established in order to extend and unify the work. What a power there is in one good idea, born in the brain of a man or woman who has the courage to express it and to begin single-handed to work for its realization!

Have you, or at least, do you *think* you have a good idea about the Sodality, and how it can be made the tremendous force which the number and the quality of its actual members justify us in thinking it can become? Begin to act on it; pray intensely about it; write about it; speak about it; spread it. The pages of the "*Acies Ordinata*", English and Latin, will be open to you. We may not be enthusiastic about your idea. We may be against it, Never mind! Write it out and sign it. We'll publish it. If it be from God, nothing can stop it. In any case, it will stimulate thought. Enthusiasm will be roused. Some of those who have long since despaired of the Sodality may take fire. Good will certainly come of it. *Give us that idea!*

THE SODALIST'S INTRODUCTION

TO THE APOSTOLATE

Subsidiary works of the Apostolate

The subsidiary works of the Apostolate of today in which lay apostles can engage, were briefly enumerated above (p. 6).

Let us see what can be done in each of these fields by laymen and especially by Sodalists.

1. Works of Charity

Works of charity may be promoted

a) in an *individual and occasional* way, e. g. by giving an alms, visiting the sick sometimes, consoling the downcast; building hospitals or at least helping thereto;

b) in a *social* way, by distributing work among the members of an association such as the Society of St. Vincent de Paul;

c) in a *pastoral* way, namely, considering charity as a part of pastoral care, and exercising it through a parochial body, e. g. the Charity Section of the Parish Committee.

Ways *b*) and *c*) are often joined in such a way that the Section has general supervision of the needs of the poor and supplies the means of helping them, while another association (St. Vincent de Paul) following the indications of the Charity Section, visits the poor and the sick, distributing alms and exercising the Apostolate of charity toward individuals methodically.

Nevertheless in the larger cities, neither the Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, nor the *Parish* Charity Sections ordinarily suffice, but it is usual to institute *Secretariates* and *Local Charity Committees* for the *whole city*, to which individual parishes and charitable bodies send delegates. Thus uniformity is preserved, government help is more easily obtained, and the work is rendered easier and more methodical.

Besides there are *diocesan* and *national* Charity Commissions.

Sodalists and other pious laymen can help by becoming active members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (St. Elizabeth for women) or other Committees indicated above, by encouraging others to do the same; by begging for the poor; by promoting savings societies and other forms of self-help-a very useful form of charity.

2. Works for youth

Youth is educated

1. in the family,
2. in the school,
3. in organizations for the young.

1. In the family, a good religious training should be given. This is done by the good example of the parents and the other children, by religious exercises in common, by religious decoration in the home (such as the crucifix, holy pictures and holy water), by taking care that the children go regularly and in good time to church and to the Sacraments and learn Christian Doctrine, by protecting them from bad company, bad books, plays, and games, indecent dress, improper conversation, etc.

The lay apostle will guard against all these, first in his own family, then in that of his employees, then in those of his relations and friends, and elsewhere too, by promoting associations of Christian mothers and fathers, instructions and lectures to parents ("Parents' evening") (1).

2. *In the schools*, while formal religious instruction should be given, a religious spirit also should pervade the whole atmosphere. Moral dangers should be removed. Even in lay schools

(1) Cfr. "Weeks" and "Days" in the U. S. A.

and mixed schools, the best teachers should be employed; everything against religion and good morals should be struck out of the pupils' books and libraries. Let the young be given time and opportunity for religious exercises, and let all the pupils be led to take part in them earnestly.

In schools for secondary and higher education: as far as possible, students should be given a good knowledge of Catholic affairs; they should learn the history of the Church and its influence merits in social life and in culture (in the sciences, literature, and arts); finally, they should be fitted to defend and propagate the Faith.

The lay apostle will promote all these as far as circumstances will permit. Besides he will strive 1st, that as many Catholic schools as possible be established and maintained, including those for higher education; 2d, that Catholic parents send their children to Catholic schools and take them away from bad ones; 3d, that many poor children may be sent to Catholic schools and even high schools, especially if they show signs of a vocation to the priesthood.

3. *Organizations for young people* are either non-Catholic, neutral or Catholic. Among the latter there are some which are primarily religious, others are both religious and cultural, or for sociability, for sport, etc.

The lay apostle will strive to draw young people away from those that are bad, and even generally from those that are neutral and attract them to good organizations, especially to those which are primarily religious, such as the Sodality. Besides, he will aid these organizations for youth as far as he can, either with his contributions, or with his labor (e. g. taking care of their libraries, or directing their sports or theatricals, and in general, offering his cooperation to the priest in charge). In a very special manner, this work in favor of children, is to be recommended to *young men*. Good is often done by inducing young people to take part in charitable works or religious demonstrations (adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in common, a General Communion, a religious procession with each society under its own banner, etc.)

Similar organizations may be formed for girls and for young people living in the country.

Deserving of special mention are *books for young people*, whether religious or recreative, historical or technical. Lay apostles may aid by writing or spreading such books.

3. Cultural life

Higher studies and acquaintance with literature should be promoted among Catholics as much as possible, so as to increase the intellectual influence of the Catholic body.

For this end we need

1. *Schools for higher education*, especially highly developed Catholic *Universities*.

2. In State Universities and Colleges, as many distinguished *Catholic professors* and *students* as possible.

3. *Societies of learned men.*

4. *Books and scientific periodicals,* written and edited by Catholics.

This should appeal to the lay apostle, especially the more educated.

4. Works of Propaganda and the Press

In the struggle of the Church with error, probably the foremost weapon today is the printed word; that huge mass of dailies, periodicals, pamplets, tracts and books of all sorts, — a force which Napoleon declared to be without equal in the world (1). "In vain will you build churches", said Pius X, "in vain will you erect schools; unless you guard them with a Catholic press". Journals and books are arms to be feared, and those who use them with knowledge will easily dominate every situation. Today it is not kings, nor legislatures, nor governments which rule the nations, but newspapers. Hence Catholics must strain every nerve to do away with bad literature and foster what is good.

Two things therefore are to be attended to-repression and fostering.

I. Lay apostles *do away with bad printed matter.*

1. They never read bad books or bad periodicals without real necessity, and especially not in public; neither do they tolerate them in their homes under any pretext.

2. They never accept them on the streets, in hotels, in public conveyances; and they reject them with scorn if they are offered.

3. They warn others also of the danger and the shame involved, when Catholics themselves favor the efforts of their own enemies by buying and reading hostile writings and quoting them as authorities.

4. They induce others who have subscribed to such newspapers, to notify the publishers to discontinue their subscriptions because the paper offends the Catholic religion (2).

5. They abstain from advertising in such papers.

6. They arrange demonstrations of protest

(1) Add to this "*radio broad-casting*" which brings the accents of the human voice simultaneously to the ears of entire continents.

(2) Similar action on the part of non-Catholics has at times made it difficult, if not impossible, to publish *paid advertisements* containing non-controversial statements about the beliefs of Catholics.

against journals which oppose the Church or its bishops or priests.

II. Lay apostles *promote good literature.*

1. By subscribing, reading and discussing Catholic newspapers and books, and recommending them to others.

2. By patronizing dealers who advertise in the Catholic press, taking care to state where they saw the advertisement.

3. By writing for the Catholic press.

4. By lending Catholic newspapers or books to others, or sending them to the sick or the imprisoned, or other poor persons.

5. By praising good and interesting articles which they find in Catholic periodicals, so as to excite interest and curiosity.

6. By seeing that various institutions, such as public libraries, provide Catholic reading-matter for their patrons (2).

7. By establishing Catholic printing-houses and journals, and training for them good writers, editors, managers, etc.

8. By founding Catholic libraries, public as well as private; and circulating libraries also.

9. By promoting the Catholic press, securing subscriptions for it, advertising in it, etc.

(2) *Public librarians* will often purchase Catholic works of a serious nature, if they are assured that there will be a demand for them, e. g., that a certain study club will make use of them. However, they have often complained that after some Catholic had induced them to purchase a book, no call has ever been made for it. This shows the necessity of *furnishing readers*, where a Catholic has induced the purchase; otherwise, it may be impossible to have other books procured.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Need for Religious Instruction. " In , there is a big field open for catechizing. Our people are good at practising their religion; but on the whole, there is room for any amount of instructing, catechetical or otherwise. Here at home, their ignorance on such matters is not of serious consequence. But when they go elsewhere, — as they do in huge numbers — it is of vital importance for them to be able to give 'a reason for the faith that is in them.' They cannot do it.

Moreover, the Socialist and his congeners are even now doing bad work in , and, if in , for the race so widely scattered. I could alarm you, if I quoted the kind of Communist talk one may hear throughout the country.

The field for the catechist is immense here. The Sodalists themselves are much in need of it ".

Editor's note. Some others agree with the writer of the letter.

" Have you many emigrants in your diocese from ? " we asked a bishop recently, referring to the country not named above.

" I have ", he answered. " And it's wonderful how they fall away from the practice of the Faith when they leave home. I often wonder if the whole nation is going to lose the Faith. "

We left the blanks in the above letter to avoid hurting national susceptibilities. Besides, we would dare affirm that the names of more than one nationality might justly be inserted there. Let each reader see if the cap fits his own nation or any part of it. In anyone finds that it does *not*, we earnestly beg him to act as if it did, and urge his Sodalists to spread the faith. If the wolf has already sneaked into the fold, he will be started on the way out; and if he is really outside, he will be kept there. As for those who are convinced that the cap *does* fit. we probably need say nothing, Anyone who has ever bent over an ignorant child in a public hospital and instructed him from the existence of God, through the Fall, to the Redemption; and administered conditional Baptism, then Penance, Eucharist and Extreme Unction in one or two sessions, because death was knocking at the door, and the Sacraments are for men, will hardly need to be urged to make the teaching of Christian Doctrine a very live matter in any Sodality where he has influence.

Young Priests. " In your exhortations to activities, it migt be no harm to suggest such a sublime form of charity as the **helping** of young and deserving **candidates for the priesthood**. Apostolic Schools are Society works, and if branches of Sodalities undertook the supporting of even one candidate, what splendid work they would do for the Church. I may mention that this form of activity has been taken up successfully by branches in Ireland, though not at all as commonly as one would like to see.

P. J. McCurtin, S. J. "

Difference between the Sodality and modern organizations. " Dear Father Editor,

From an answer given by your Reverence (in " *A. O.* " I, X, p. 91, no. 8) it would seem that we are not always bound to urge the founding of Sodalities in place of modern societies, but that where the latter are already established, it suffices to imbue them with the spirit of the Sodality and to direct them along Sodality lines. Is this really the meaning of your answer? Certainly such a way of acting would often make our work easier, and sometimes (as it seems to me) more useful.

S. M. ".

Answer: Yes; that was the meaning of our answer. However, lest we should be misunderstood, we will make this distinction:

a) Where we can freely choose, and where there is no grave reason for preferring those modern societies to the Sodality, we will prefer the Sodality.

b) But where we practically have no liberty in the matter, or where there are grave reasons for preferring the modern societies, we do not think it necessary to substitute the Sodality. But in that case: we must take care that either within the modern society, or alongside of it, the substantials of the Sodality be preserved and developed. Those substantials are, in the first place, a

deep religious formation, an active apostolate, the devotion to Mary, full authority in the Director.

For example, we may cite a case which is of frequent occurrence in the United States. There you find large and flourishing bodies of men in the *Holy Name Society*, the members of which go to Holy Communion every monht. There is a Society like it in Germany, called the *Men's Apostolate.* The priest's work is relatively little and easy, the results great. These societies are being propagated everywhere, and are already founded in many parishes. " Why should we desert this work ? " many ask. " Why should we institute Sodalities along side of it and thus create confusion and rivalry and do away with societies which are so good and so pleasing to the men ? " The answer is easy. Such societies are not to be given up. If they respond to the needs and the tastes of a considerable body of Catholic men, let us have them by all means! But what is to prevent us from pointing out to those societies the advantages of a higher spiritual life and the necessity of the apostolate, and inviting *volunteers* to band themselves together under our direction for activities in those two fields? Have special meetings for such bands with appropriate lectures on the spiritual life and the apostolate and with conferences among the men themselves. Put the work under the special patronage of the Blessed Virgin, and let it be carried on as an act of special honor to her. Then we will have the substance of Sodalities of Our Lady. Would it not be deplorable if after succeding in bringing many men to monthly Holy Communion, we should make no attempt to initiate them into the apostolate and the systematic defense of the Church? Certainly this should be done. It will soon give us men's Sodalities which will be genuine in every sense of the word.

This will not disrupt those other societies. The men who enter on a more fervent life can retain their membership therein, and should be urged to do so. If a man can be a Knight of Columbus and an Elk at the same time, why may he not belong to the Sodality as well as to the Holy Name Society, or to a Third Order?

WITH THE REVIEWS

Nurses' Sodalities. Some hints of Fr. Garesché in " *Hospital Progress* ". Writing on the feature of **special devotions** in nurses' Sodalities, Fr. Garesché, rightly insists that the nurses sould be so formed to acts of devotion that during their training period they will develop *initiative.* It will often happen, owing to the fewness of priests and the occupations of the sisters in charge of the training school, that there will be no one to give helpful suggestions about special devotions. But if a Devotion Section be formed with a president and several other Sodalists, under the general supervision of the former, it will be easy to have posted daily on some bulletin board, a special act of devotion suggested by some Section-member, such as the conversion of a particular patient. Thus the Sodality as a whole and the individual Sodalists will get into the wholesome habit of tending to their own spiritual activities.

In the February issue of the same magazine, Fr. Garesché, after pointing out the manifold opportunities which come to nurses in the course of their work to *explain the Faith,* offers some suggestions leading to self-help on the part of the nurses. They include: a sufficiency of good books in the Sodality library; an instruction to the whole Sodality with prayers (instead of the Office) for the spread of the Faith and talks by nurses who have succeeded in instructing patients. In many hospitals, Fr. Garesché affirms, instructions preliminary to reception into the Church are given by the nurses.

Perhaps the best of his suggestions is this; let the nurse begin catechizing; the interest thus aroused combined with the experience of her own limitations will lead her to read of her own accord. But without this stimulus of having to give a definite answer on a definite subject to a certain individual, it is doubtful if she will ever look at the books.

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

The Sodalists' Reading. A Father writes:

" We can't induce the Sodalists to make any spiritual reading. We have a library with books on asceticism, history, sciences and light literature. But the Sodalists go in for the latter almost exclusively. I know very well that the reading of serious and spiritual works is of the highest importance, but *how can we make the Sodalists take to it?* "

Answer: In the first place, Father, don't despair if Sodalists look for reading that amuses. The imagination is the easiest faculty to exercise, and this is especially true of the young. Even grown-ups, seriously employed in mental work during the day, when evening comes, often turn to books which waft the mind away from the dust of the daily struggle into the region of illusions and ideals. Besides, it must be confessed that there is not a great choice of *spiritual* books capable of delighting as well as edifying, and written in a style attractive to the men of today. Hence the necessity of providing *recreative* books which, while they divert the mind, imbue it with religion and morality.

But, as you say, this is not enough, and the question remains: *how can Sodalists be induced to read professedly pious and serious books?* A Director, it seems to us, can effect this if he skilfully and convincingly explains the necessity and utility of this reading and repeats his exhortations under various forms. Let him persuade the Sodalists, for example, to *preface their reading* of lighter books with a page of the *Imitation* of the *life of some Saint;* thus they may sanctify the whole time spent in reading. Instead of inculcating spiritual reading in a dry-as-dust fashion, let him indicate briefly the contents of a *particular book,* praise its beauty and charm, and give a more detailed account of some striking passages.

It may help to dwell on the following. The Catholic cause is retarded by a great lack of really cultured men.

Our people, eminent in professional knowledge, are often childishly ignorant in religion. Even pious persons at times are no better off. Boys, belonging to Catholic clubs, have been found whit a glib knowledge of Socialist doctrines, but whit no notion of the Catholic answers. Church history, apologetics, the relation of science to faith, the achievements of Catholics in science, literature, arts, etc., are closed books to many persons. Our Faith is the Road to Heaven; what a shame not to be able to point it out to the honest inquirer! Experience shows that such Catholics, when a religious question comes up in conversation with non-Catholics, become confused and if they can say anything at all, it is very fragmentary and unsatisfactory, if not absurd. This ignorance is so wide spread that when the Church is to be defended, by books or articles or public speeches, very few lay people can be depended upon. No need to wonder at such ignorance. Who knows anything considerable on a subject, when five, ten, fifteen or twenty years have elapsed since he read a line about it. Probably the last time such persons oponed a book on religion was when they poll-parroted through their examination for Confirmation.

Now the Sodalist, who is worthy of the name, not only professes a higher spiritual life than the ordinary layman but also aims seriously at helping other souls and forwarding the Catholic cause. Hence it is not only desirable but *absolutely necessary* that he use the means which are indispensable to his purpose. He must read and study the proper books.

Of course, Sodalists can be very ignorant and still by prayer and charity do much good. But such Sodalists are not up to the Sodality ideal, which is to be not merely *zealous*, but zealous "*as far as their condition in life permits*". Their hearts are working well, but their heads are not. Prayer and charity disarm prejudice and call down graces, but they do not answer questions. It takes *mind* and *memory* to do that — mind and memory filled with the *positive and accurate knowledge* which cannot be had without serious reading (1).

(1) You might form a *study-club*. Assign a *definite subject*; indicate the books to be read; preside over a discussion of the point, encouraging brief statements from individuals; finally, sum up the doctrine. Thus, while you relieve the members of the difficulty of making up their minds where to begin, you can at the same time, direct them to what is most important. Moreover, the same practice can be applied with profit to any Section. It will put life into it. It spells the difference between active and passive Sodalists. And passivity is our bane.

"*How to Conduct a Study club*" is a useful pamphlet issued by the National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1312 Massachusetts Ave., N. W. Washington, D. C. The Conference also furnishes good outlines for a year's study in live social subjects.

The Sodality in the "Epitome". In the new "Epitome" of the Institute of the Society, devotion to the Sacred Heart occupies 8 lines, devotion to Our Lady in general, also has 8 lines. But *30 lines are devoted to the Sodality of Our Lady.*

CHRONICLE

Jugoslavia. Good effects of persecution. "Religiously intolerant and therefore dangerous to the unity of the State."

Such is the Sodality of Our Lady according to the edict issued against it by the anti-Catholic government of Jugoslavia. But such a storm was raised among the intensely Catholic Croats and Serbs that the government did not dare to promulgate its edict except where Catholics were in the minority. This attempt to suppress the student Sodalities has proved a great advertisement for them and has called forth strong expressions of loyalty on the part of Sodalists and has been the occasion of many applications for admission.

Malaga, Spain. The Apostolate in the Home. Women were very much in evidence in the Jesuit Church in Malaga, but men were decidedly not. Fr. Manuel de la Cruz, S. J., determined to work upon the people that he had, and to get them if possible to reach the men. He took this simple line of argument:

"You ladies are very fond of your men-folk, and I don't wonder at it. They are very refined, perfect gentlemen, most thoughtful and affectionate, possessed of all the natural virtue one could wish for. But there is something else which I don't understand: You seem perfectly content to love them during your natural lives, *but no more.* May be you will deny this, but I will prove it. While you practice piety, go to Mass on Sunday, frequent the Sacraments, and make annual retreats, your men-folk live as if they believed nothing; they pay no attention to the law of God or the precepts of the Church. But, at least apparently, you think nothing of it. Your mode of life and theirs are directly opposite; you are going heavenward; they are going hellward. Consequently, death will separate you from them forever; you will never be able to love each other any more. How can you live, tranquil and serene, without doing anything to avert this awful tragedy?"

The ladies returned to their homes where the Father could not go and said what he could not say; they prayed and worked, and the result has been another proof that women do not need to vote. There is today, in the Jesuit Church at Malaga, a new and flourishing Sodality of Gentlemen, and another for young workingmen; new life in the formerly languishing Sodalities of Young Men and Boys. Human respect has received a body-blow; so that at present, large numbers of men go frequently to Confession and Comunion, the groups for Nocturnal Adoration are multiplied, the ranks of the religious processions on the Feast of the Sacred Heart and that of Corpus Christi have been increased.

Even the most ardent advocates of an exclusively contemplative life for the Sodality, must take off their hats to an apostolate like this.

(Estrella do Mar)

The Barcelona Sodality. *Its activities.* This famous Sodality, reorganized by Fr. Fiter in 1886, in now divided into three parts, the lst for young men from 18 to 25 years of age, the 2d for married men, and the 3d for college students under 17. As the first is the most interesting, we shall treat of it exclusively. It is made up of College and University students as well as of men engaged in industrial pursuits and business.

The Sections for Piety include:

1) *The Guard of Honor of Mary and Joseph,* with 400 members. Every day three bands remain half an hour each before the altars of the Immaculate, of St. Joseph and St. Aloysius; on Saturdays, two similar bands watch at another altar of Our Lady; and other extraordinary visits are made on the principal festivals.

2) *The Mass of Congratulation,* with 200 members, to rejoice with our Lady over the definition of the Immaculate Conception.

3) *Daily Mass and Communion,* 100 members.

4) *Sunday Communion,* 100 members.

5) *Saturdary Rosary,* a voluntary section which is very popular. It also furnishes lights and decorations for the altar of Mary Immaculate.

The works of zeal include visits to hospitals and asylums, catechism centers for children, and many institutions for propaganda and social action.

Doubtless, the principal good work is the *Center of Our Lady of Carmel and of St. Peter Claver,* which occupies a large building in one of the most populous parts of Barcelona, inhabited chiefly by the working-classes.

The twelve features of this Community Center are as follows:

1. *Public worship* in the Center Chapel, comprising two daily Masses and on Sundays and holydays, an instruction, the beads, and very frequently, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

2. *Two Sodalities,* one for working-men, another for children, with 223 members.

3. *The League of Perseverance* for those who have made retreats.

4. *Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.* 95 adorers take turns on first Fridays and on certain feasts.

5. *Catechism,* taught by Sodalists on the afternoons of Sundays and holydays.

6. A *Day-school for children* with an attendance of about 250. Daily Mass and Monthly Communion leagues are formed among them.

A *Night-school for adults* in also maintained. The teachers are paid by the protectors of the Center.

7. A *Popular Circulating Library.*

8. A modest *Loan and Savings Bank* for the sick and for invalids.

9. A *Medical Clinic* with 4 doctors and 2 dentists.

10. A *Popular Secretariate,* which guards the interests of the associates of the center.

11. The *Recreation Section,* a number of Sodalists who direct affairs in the assembly hall and the recreation rooms. There are moving pictures on Sundays and many sorts of games for little children and big ones too. Though they belong to the monied and titled classes, the Sodalists mix freely with the poor with the usual resultant good feeling.

12. The plant is completed by a good *field for sports.*

In similar parts of Barcelona, there are two other such Centers on a more modest scale, maintained by the Sodalists.

Still another Center was instituted in 1922 in the poorest part of the city, which has been for years in the most abandoned condition as regards religion, with many irreligious, Protestant and Spiritualist schools.

Beginning with 80 children, the attendance has increased to 250. This work was due to the zeal of the Sodalists, and was put into effect only with difficulty and with considerable expense.

Another of this Sodality's activities is that of the *Apostolate of the Press.*

Their aim is to combat the bad press, by diffusing good reading-matter in hospitals, asylums, centers and patronages; they help parish priests to obtain Catholic publications, and they seek out collaborators who will undertake to spread this literature and to answer difficulties. In addition, the members of this Section collect magazines, papers, etc., which, once read, are of no importance to their owners; thus, in 1923, they distributed 63,504 copies of Catholic reading-matter.

Charity is specially practiced by six sections. 3 visit hospitals, 2 visit asylums, and 1 provides clothes for the poor sick.

In 1921, 1,100 Sodalists made 6,300 visits to the sick. They go in pairs assigned by the president of the Section, and try to help and encourage the inmates by alms, instruction, etc., as the circumstances may suggest. 1,766 lepers were visited in 1923 by 223 Sodalists.

Besides these activities, for the personal improvement of the Sodalists, there are *Academies* of Philosophy, Languages, Sciences, Medicine, Law, Engineering, Pharmacy, Sociology, Music and the Fine Arts. Papers are read by members and special lecturers are heard from time to time.

(Estrella do Mar)

Buenos Aires. *The Sodality for Theologians and Philosophers* in the Grand Seminary of Buenos Aires has received instructions during the past year, from its Director, Fr. Marian Castellano, S. J., on the true spirit of the Sodality and on the method of organizing it in parishes. One constant exercise of piety is that of " Laus Perennis ", in which two Sodalists are appointed to make special efforts on an assigned day, to honor the Blessed Virgin. Funds are being raised for a Sodality chapel.

In April, 1924, the *Charity Section* was founded and as a result, 67 visits were made by 605 Sodalists to 6,155 persons; 2,933 pious objects and 6,717 books and pamphlets were distributed; 399 Sacraments were administered. The sick were greatly consoled; and many received the last Sacraments who otherwise would probably have died without them. For the Sodalists, these visits have been of immense profit in stirring up apostolic zeal. Every other week, the Section assembles for the reading of an appropriate book, or for their Director's talk on the work. The year ended by religious services in the hospital chapels, conducted by the Section, and attended by all the sick who could come.

The *Mission Section* was established in May. On that occasion, the Director set forth the reasons for its inauguration and refuted the usual objections based on the pagans we have at home. The new Section is completely in accord with the desires so warmly expressed by Popes Benedict XV and Pius XI, that seminarists should receive thorough information about the missions and the means of helping them, so that they may be able, when priests, to give solid instruction on the responsibility and apostolic duty of the laity in this regard. The prayers and good works of the members are offered for a special intention assigned at each meeting by the Director. Members also contribute money to the Propagation of the Faith and to the Holy Childhood. Meetings are held twice a month, with appropriate reading, a paper by some member, and a talk by the Director. Other extraordinary meetings are open to all the Seminarists. The section joined in celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the arrival of the Salesian Fathers in South America. A Mission *Library* is forming, and with the help of the White Fathers, a Mission *Museum* has been started. Correspondence about missionary activities was begun with all the Seminaries of the Republic.

The *Sodality of the Little Seminary* of Buenos Aires is also being managed with the object of forming future Directors. It has four Sections under the headings of Piety (1), Charity, Catechism, and Missions. In the *Piety Section*, " Laus Perennis " is practiced. On Thursdays and Sundays, bands of from four to six Sodalists succeed each other every ten minutes, before the statue of the Blessed Virgin: and every day, two Sodalists offer their Holy Communions and the day's works for the Sodality. In reparation for indignities offered in recent times to pictures of Our Lady, the Sodalists caused to be placed upon her statue, a golden locket containing all their names and destined to contain the names of future Sodalists.

The *Charity Section* has occupied itself in visits to orphans and to children in hospitals, making gifts and giving lessons in catechism.

The *Catechism Section* is intended to arouse enthusiasm for the teaching of Christian Doctrine and to direct in the work all the Little Seminarians, non-Sodalists as well as Sodalists. Meetings are held to discuss means and methods. Practice is had with some 40 poor children who present themselves daily for bread and soup. Sacrifice is exercised here also, as the time is the noon recreation and the Seminarians give their own dainties as rewards to the children.

The *Mission Section* guides all missionary activity in the Seminary through Committees and Sub-committees of Sodalists, the members of which direct various groups or " choirs " of Seminarians. By thorough organization and division of labor, it has been possible to catalogue and assemble historical, geographical and statistical information about individual missions, and the result has been a number of truly informative lectures on mission topics. Alms, the gathering of postage stamps, and the support of a seminarist of the Caroline Islands, represent the material activities of the Section. Lectures with lantern slides have been given to children in hospitals.

(1) Would it not be preferable to give a more restricted name to such a Section, as a Section does not take in all the members, whereas all must exercise *Piety*? Ed.

The *teaching of Catechism* in the Grand Seminary has a special Director, but in the Little Seminary, it is under the Director of the Sodality. The work is enliened by stereopticon lectures on the life of Our Lord and on selected incidents of Bible History. Pupils are graded. The Seminary play-grounds were opened to them. The year ended with a festival which included a public contest, theatricals, and the solemn distribution of prizes. On leaving the Little Seminary, each student carried away a store of articles, made by himself or bought with his savings, to serve him in his catechetical efforts during vacation. From the statistics of this zealous work, we learn that 34 children were taken from Protestant influences, and 84 catechetical missions were given by the Little Seminarians on vocation.

(Seminary Year-book)

OVER THE TELEPHONE

Stamps for the Missions. " All my Sodalists are very eager collectors of cancelled postage stamps for the Missions, but I am told it costs more to gather and send them than the stamps are worth. "

Well, Father Henry Westropp flatly denies it. Write him (1) and he will furnish a printed brief on the subject. He has been on the missions for years and he ought to know.

But even if it did not pay a profit, the benefit to your Sodalists from a habit which constantly reminds them of God's interests in souls, is some thing worth fostering. Tell your Sodalists to continue saving stamps and add tinfoil. This practice may lead to greater things in God's service.

Filthy lucre. " Father, your explicit directions for sending alms to the " *Acies Ordinata* ", make me laugh. One would think that you had actually received something ".

" Why, of course we have ".

" You don't tell me! Surely, it wasn't very much ".

" Well, ' much ' is a relative term. Twasn't enough to pay all our old bills by far, but it helped quite a bit ".

" But at least, the contributions can't have been *many*? ".

" No-o, I wouldn't say many, — rather like the membership of the Sodality, — *select*. Of course, I wouldn't for the world have you think that we wish to be extreme in this matter of selectness — mustn't run a good thing into the ground, you know. ' In fine ' (as Fr. Rodriguez says), we'll be *glad to receive your remittance* ".

(1) Our Lady of Victory Mission, Victoria, Dist. Champaran, Paharia. India.

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Superiorum permissu.

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